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LOG CABIN

STATE PARK



THIS IS YOUR PARK

PRESERVE ITS NATURAL BEAUTY

Lincoln Log

Another of the ties that binds the memory of Lincoln closely to the people of Illinois is Lincoln Log Cabin State Park south of Charleston in Coles County. Here Thomas Lincoln and his wife, Sarah Bush Lincoln, Abraham Lincoln's father and step-mother, spent their last years.

The cabin which originally housed the Lincolns was sent to the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1892 and was to have been returned to Coles County for reassembly after the Fair. Instead it mysteriously disappeared. When the State, after acquiring the site in 1928, set about reconstructing it, great care was used to locate its exact position and to duplicate from existing photographs and affidavits of old settlers all its original details. A pole barn stands nearby, and an ash-hopper for making lye, long wedges for splitting rails, an ox-yoke and a grindstone have been added.

Hardship and suffering attended the Lincoln family prior to their settling in Coles County. Thomas Lincoln, carpenter and farmer, met with indifferent success in his attempts to earn a living in Kentucky and Indiana. He moved frequently but invariably encountered failure, poverty, and debt. In Indiana his wife, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, and their daughter, Sarah, died during a typhoid epidemic. Thomas Lincoln remarried, lived another few years in Indiana and finally at the instigation of John Hanks, sold his holdings and set out for Illinois and a fresh start.

The ill luck which had dogged Thomas Lincoln and his kin, however, followed them in 1830 to their first Illinois home southwest of Decatur. After a miserable winter, marooned in a crude cabin by six feet of snow, Tom Lincoln, disgusted with Illinois, started back to Indiana in the early spring of 1831. En route, he stopped in Coles County where he was persuaded to settle at Buck Grove eight miles northwest of the present State Park and give Illinois another chance. Meanwhile, Abraham, now twenty-one, easy-going, "backwoodsdy" and studious, had departed with his half-brother, John D. Johnston, John Hanks, and Denton Offut, their employer, on a trading trip to New Orleans.

Back in St. Louis some weeks later, Lincoln walked to Edwardsville and thence to Buck Grove for a visit with his parents. It was during this brief sojourn that Lincoln, at nearby Wabash Point, wrestled and threw Dan Needham, the bully of Cumberland County. A short time later he set off on foot, his head and shoulders showing above the tall grass, for New Salem and a job in Denton Offut's store.

Thomas Lincoln, ever restive, moved in 1834 to a farm a half mile southeast of Lerna, and then again in 1837 to Goose

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Lin State Park



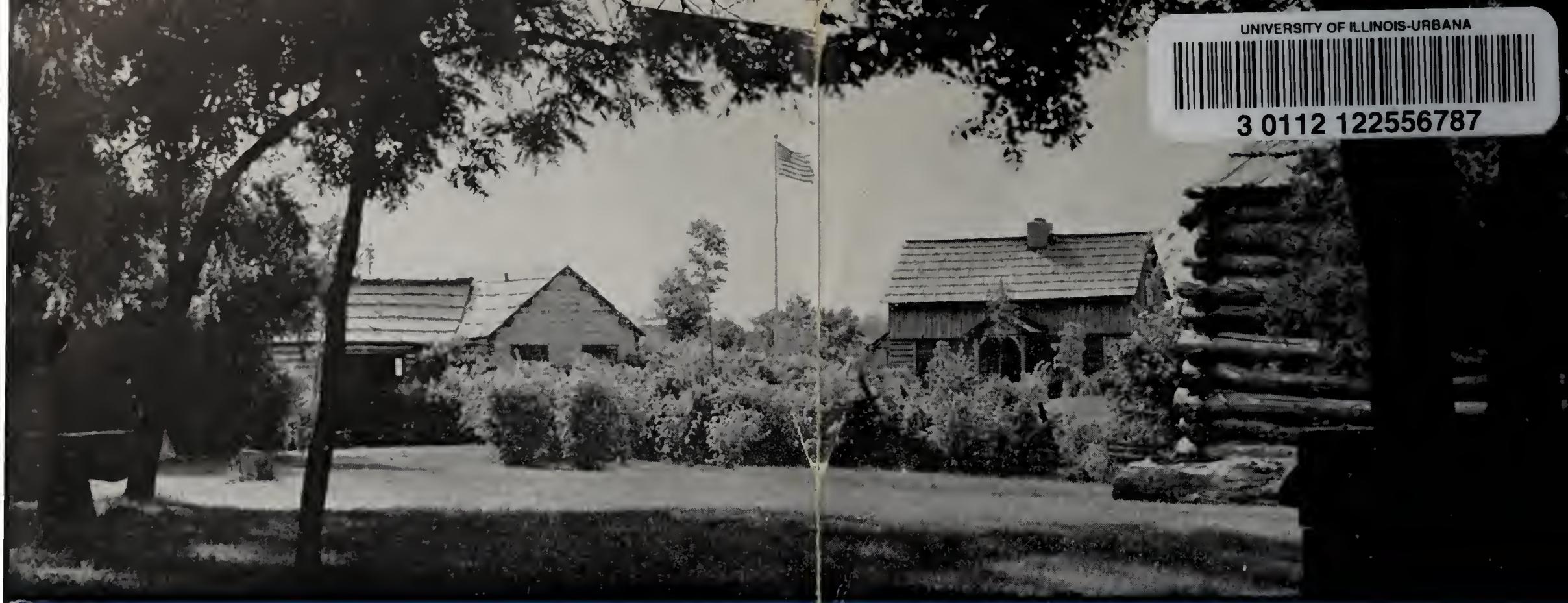
• The Lincoln log cabin

Nest Prairie, site of the present State Park. Things here progressed not so very well, and on several occasions he called on his son for help. Lincoln always responded and in 1841, eased his parents' distress by paying them \$200 for the east 40 acres, allowing them to retain a life estate. After Thomas Lincoln's death in 1851, Lincoln refused to sell his interest, retaining it for the use of his stepmother. John J. Hall, who had purchased the west eighty, acquired title to the remainder in 1888 by reason of 20 years of undisputed possession. Mrs. Lincoln remained on the farm until her death in 1869.

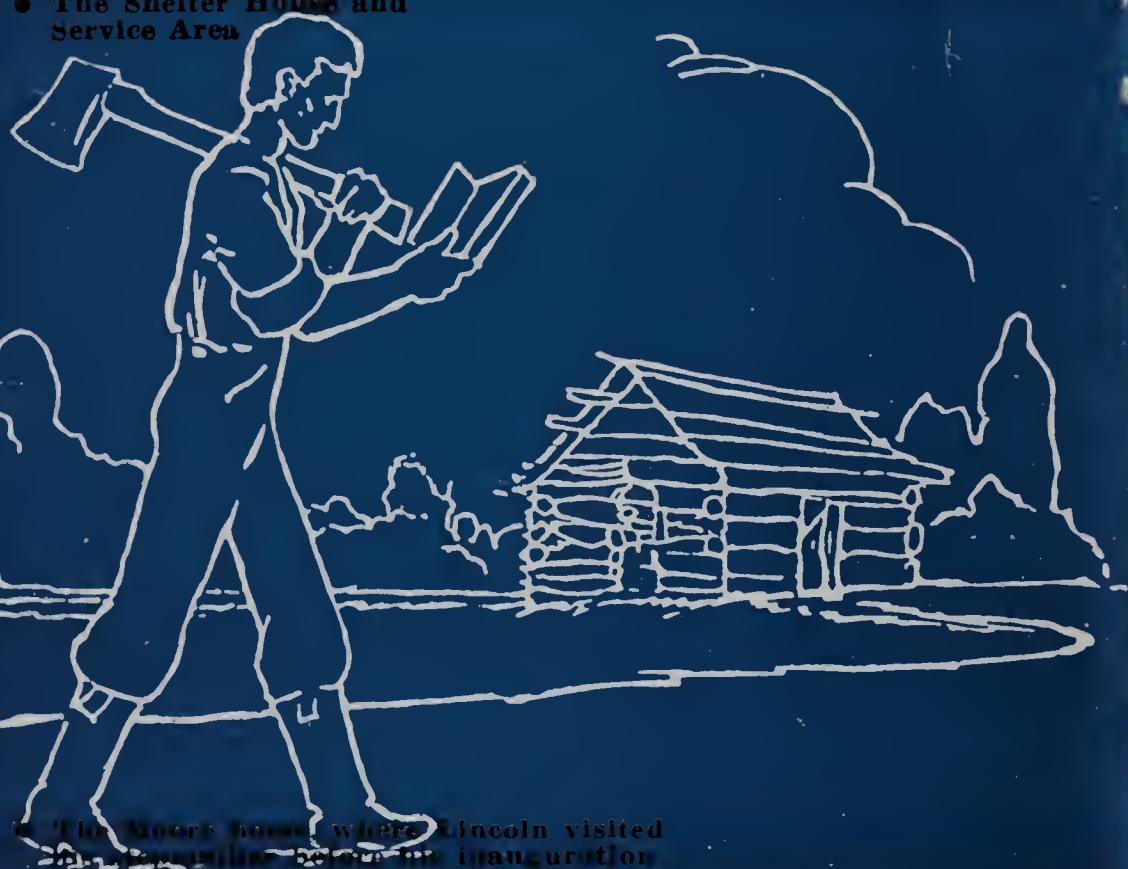
Near the site of the cabin in the former village of Farmington is the Moore Home owned by the State, where Lincoln ate his last meal with his stepmother and her daughter who were visiting there before leaving for his inauguration in Washington in 1861. A mile and one-half northeast of the 86 acre plot on which the cabin is located is Fox Ridge State Park, presented to the State in 1936 by the people of Charleston. The old Shiloh Cemetery where Thomas and Sarah Bush Lincoln are buried is also in this vicinity, three miles northwest of the cabin. This cemetery, in 1935, was renamed by its trustees and is now known as the Thomas Lincoln Cemetery.



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• The Shelter House and Service Area



The log house where Lincoln visited during his inauguration.



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